

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1292

As Passed House:

February 12, 2007

Title: An act relating to establishing the eastern Washington state veterans' cemetery.

Brief Description: Establishing the eastern Washington state veterans' cemetery.

Sponsors: By Representatives Barlow, Ahern, Morrell, Hailey, Seaquist, Schindler, Appleton, Skinner, Williams, McDonald, Hurst, Campbell, Haler, Wood, Moeller, VanDeWege, McCune, Conway and Kenney; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/23/07, 1/24/07 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/5/07, 2/6/07 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/07, 96-0.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes a veterans cemetery in Eastern Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Green, Kretz, McDermott, Miloscia and Ormsby.

Staff: Colleen Kerr (786-7168).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 32 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Dunshee, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Buri, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunn, Ericks, Fromhold, Grant, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi,

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Kenney, Kessler, Kretz, Linville, McDermott, McDonald, McIntire, Morrell, Pettigrew, Priest, Schual-Berke, Seaquist and P. Sullivan.

Staff: Owen Rowe (786-7391).

Background:

According to Federal Veterans Administration (VA) statistics, there are 140,000 veterans living in Eastern Washington; 37 percent of these veterans live in Spokane County.

Washington has one national veterans cemetery, the Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent. This cemetery is 280 miles from Spokane. In order to serve this population, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs has developed plans for a state veterans cemetery in Spokane County.

The VA provides grants to build veterans cemeteries within 100 miles of major metropolitan areas. These grants pay 100 percent of design, construction, and equipment costs. The state must provide the land and is responsible for operation and maintenance. The state also fronts the design costs; these are reimbursed once the application is approved by the VA.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is authorized to establish a State Veteran's Cemetery in Eastern Washington. All honorably discharged veterans and their spouses are eligible for internment in the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery. The WDVA is granted rule making authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (State Government & Tribal Affairs)

(In support) For many years Eastern Washington veterans have been requesting a cemetery in Eastern Washington. The only veterans cemetery in the state is on the west side and it is only fair that the east side have its own veterans cemetery as well.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (Appropriations)

(In support) This bill is a long time in coming. The Washington State Department of Veterans' Affairs has wanted this bill for over 10 years. About 25 percent of the state's population is located east of the mountains, and currently the only veterans' cemetery is located on the west side of the state. We have a duty to honor our veterans. Veterans in Eastern Washington really need a cemetery of their own.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (State Government & Tribal Affairs) Representative Barlow, prime sponsor; and John Lee, Washington Department of Veterans Affairs.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) Representative Barlow, prime sponsor; John Lee, Director, Washington Department of Veterans' Affairs; and Representative Ahern.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (State Government & Tribal Affairs) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.